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THREE BUSTS BY HOUDON



THE marble bust of Franklin by Jean Antoine Houdon, presented to the Museum in 1873 by Mr. John Bard, has recently been moved from the main staircase to the south gallery of the Wing of Decorative Arts, where it is now shown, together with the two painted plaster busts of Voltaire and Rousseau, the gift of Mr. Morgan in 1908. In connection with this change of installation, the following notes upon these sculptures may be of interest. The writer acknowledges his indebtedness for valuable data and many

quotations to the admirable *Memoirs of the Life and Works of Jean Antoine Houdon* by C. H. Hart and E. Biddle, published in Philadelphia, 1911.

The bust of Franklin is life-size, executed in white marble, signed and dated: *houdon f — 1778*. It was given to the Museum by Mr. John Bard in 1873, and originally belonged to Dr. Samuel Bard, a physician of New York at the time of the Revolution, and a friend of Franklin. Since this is the only Houdon bust of Franklin in marble that we know, it may well be the bust referred to in the following extract from a letter¹ written in 1802 by Dupont de Nemours from New York, to Thomas Jefferson: "Houdon has left in America a very fine bust of Benjamin Franklin which is now at my house. This bust is in marble, is worth 100 Louis of our money, equaling about 480 dollars. Nothing would be more appropriate than for the nation to place it in your Capitol (Va.), and Houdon, to whom Virginia still owes a thousand crowns on the statue of Washington, stands in real need of the money." Nothing came of this proposal, however, and the further history of the bust is unknown, unless, as it has been sug-

gested, the piece was acquired by Doctor Bard.

The bust of Franklin was modeled by Houdon in 1778 and exhibited in terracotta at the Salon of 1779. It will be remembered that Franklin arrived in France toward the close of 1776 to represent this country at the court of Versailles. His great popularity may be appreciated from the number of portraits of all sorts and kinds which were made of him during his sojourn in France. One of the earliest and most important of these was the bust modeled in 1777 by Jean Jacques Caffieri. The Caffieri bust, as Messrs. Hart and Biddle prove conclusively, is the original of the popular type of Franklin portrait, the one showing him with the loose neck-cloth, or jabot hanging down outside his waistcoat. For a century this type of Franklin bust was erroneously attributed to Cerracchi, a sculptor who worked in the United States from 1791 to 1795.

The Caffieri bust is thought by some to be a better characterization of Franklin than the Houdon bust. Indeed, the opinion has been advanced that Houdon did not work from life, since in a letter² dated 1783, that is, five years after he had modeled the bust of Franklin, he wrote: "The day that you had the kindness to present me to Doctor Franklin, I called at your domicile to thank your Son for all his kindness and to express my recognition of the debt I am under to you: at the same time to inform you that M. Bufon proposed to carry, himself, to Doctor Franklin the book in question touching the mould of Louis XV, etc." This, however, does not appear a very convincing reason for believing that the bust of Houdon was not modeled from life. The direction which Houdon has given the eyes in his bust of Franklin is perhaps unfortunate, but it cannot be denied that the bust is characterized by a penetrating insight into character as well as by great technical skill. Montaignon and Duplessis,³ in writing of Houdon's bust of Franklin, say: "Houdon could not fail to feel the attraction that

¹Jefferson MS. Correspondence, Library of Congress. Quoted by C. H. Hart and E. Biddle, *Memoirs*, etc., p. 106.

²C. H. Hart and E. Biddle. *Memoirs*, etc., p. 103.

³Montaignon and Duplessis. *Houdon, sa vie et ses ouvrages*, 1855, p. 241.

BULLETIN OF THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

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EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS IN THE MORGAN COLLECTION

IN addition to the special exhibitions of his drawings which Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan has allowed the Museum to arrange, and which will begin this month with a series by masters of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, he has kindly consented to allow us to make at once a temporary exhibition of the paintings which he has had sent over from London, including the great Raphael which has been for a number of years in the National Gallery and the pictures from his London residence. These will be shown in the Gallery of Special Exhibitions, and the exhibition will open early in January.

A LECTURE ON SARDES

BY invitation of the Trustees, Mr. Howard Crosby Butler will give an account, with illustrations, of his recent excavations at Sardes in the Lecture Hall of the Museum, Wednesday

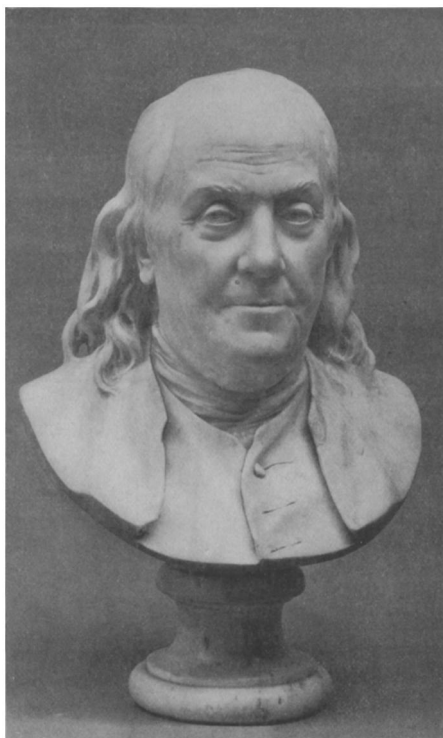
afternoon, December 11th, at four o'clock. These excavations have resulted in the discovery of a large and important Greek Temple, and of many other remains of Greek and Lydian Art which are as yet unpublished.

The lecture will be open to the public without tickets. The entrance to the Lecture Hall is on Fifth Avenue, opposite eighty-third street.

THE MUSEUM HISTORY

THE history of the Museum, from its inception in 1869 to the present time, with an introductory chapter on the early museums of art in New York, written by Miss Winifred E. Howe, to which reference has been made in the Bulletin from time to time, is now on the press and will be published before Christmas. It will be a volume of approximately 300 pages, with illustrations from many drawings

and paintings, and will, it is hoped, be of permanent value as a record of the progress and development of the Museum.



BUST OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN
BY
HOUDON

seemed to draw all France toward this Sage and Savant from another hemisphere, and he must have been happy in reproducing the venerable head of this old man, beautiful from its intelligence and honesty. He succeeded in it perfectly, and the bust of him that he has left to us is one of his finest and most simple. This bust is the man himself, reflective, calm, benevolent, smiling, and he makes us understand the man as clearly as his writings do. It had great success, and for an inscription Turgot penned the following lines: 'Eripuit caelo fulmen sceptrumque tyrannis.'"

A great modern sculptor paid his tribute to Houdon's Franklin when Rodin¹, speaking of the bust, exclaimed: "Behold, all alive, one of the ancestors of modern America!"

Two other busts of Franklin signed and dated: houdon f— 1778, are in this country. One is a plastercast given by Houdon to Thomas Jefferson, and now in the Boston Athenæum. The second is a bronze, under life-size, that came from Paris, and is now owned by Mr. Joseph Y. Jeans of Philadelphia. A painted plaster bust of Franklin signed by Houdon, belonging to M. Lucien Faucou, Paris, was exhibited at the Chicago Exposition in 1893; another is in the Louvre, another in the Museum at Angers, and one is in the collection of Mr. Edward Tuck, of Paris.

In 1910 Mr. Morgan gave the Museum two busts in *plâtre teint*, or plaster painted to imitate terracotta, representing Voltaire and Rousseau, which had been presented in

¹La Liberté, Paris, August 12, 1910.

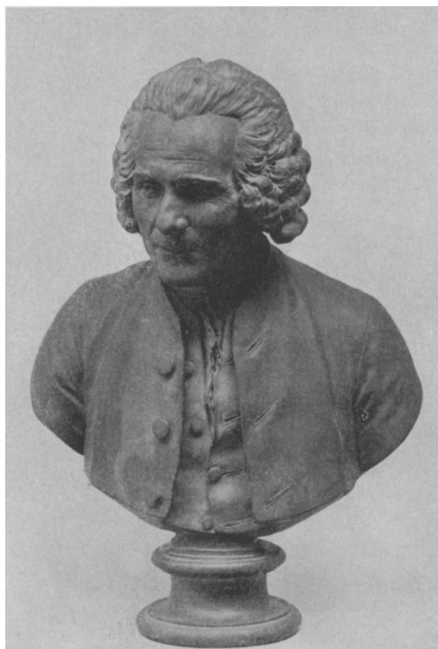
the eighteenth century to the Société des Amis del l'Instruction, at Geneva. The bust of Voltaire has a seal inscribed, Acad. Royale de Peinture et Sculp. Houdon sc. They are mounted on the original wooden pedestals, which are painted and gilded.

Except for the absence of drapery over the shoulders, the bust of Voltaire is like the Comédie-Française bust known as the one "with the wig," which was modeled in 1778 and was the first step in preparation for the famous statue of Voltaire seated, finished in 1781.

The bust "with the wig" was first shown in plaster, and it was this bust which was crowned with laurel on the stage of the Comédie-Française on the 30th of March, 1778, at the sixth representation of *Irène*, after Mme. Vestris had recited the verses by the Marquis of Saint-Marc in honor of Voltaire. This bust was exhibited in marble at the Salon of 1779, together with a statuette of Voltaire and a second bust in the antique manner.

Jean Jacques Rousseau died the 3rd of July, 1778, at Ermenonville.

Houdon hastened to take a death mask of Rousseau, from which he worked up the terracotta bust exhibited in the Salon of 1779, catalogued as belonging to the Marquis de Girardin. The best known busts now extant are the one in the Louvre (bronze), the one in the Royal Library at Versailles (terracotta), and the one in the Museum at Gotha (gypsum bronzed) signed Houdon, 1778. The bronze in the Louvre differs from the gypsum bust at Gotha in several respects. Houdon also



BUST OF JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU
BY HOUDON

made a third bust of Rousseau wearing a full wig and the costume of the period, as a companion to a similarly arranged one of Voltaire. This type is illustrated by the bust in the Museum.

A description of the bust of Rousseau exhibited at the Salon in 1779 may well be applied to the bust in the Metropolitan. The passage is taken from the *Mémoires Secrets* of 1779: "What fire in this last portrait, whose piercing glance seems to dive into the innermost recesses of the human heart! From a certain point of view, the illusion is so complete and the glance of the eye so direct and lively, that the bust seems animated, and one feels like avoiding its gaze." J. B.

GOLD JEWELRY FROM THE PHILIPPINE IS- LANDS

THIS collection constitutes a typical exhibit of the best work that has been done by Filipino goldsmiths, and the many attractive and beautiful specimens shown here should go far toward dissipating the prejudice that the Filipinos are not gifted with the qualities that insure progress in civilization. While much of the gold, silver, and ivory work of the Philippine Islands is distinctly Spanish in character, there is not lacking a note of originality, showing that although the native artists followed the Spanish types, they were able to impart to the work of their hands a characteristic quality all their own.

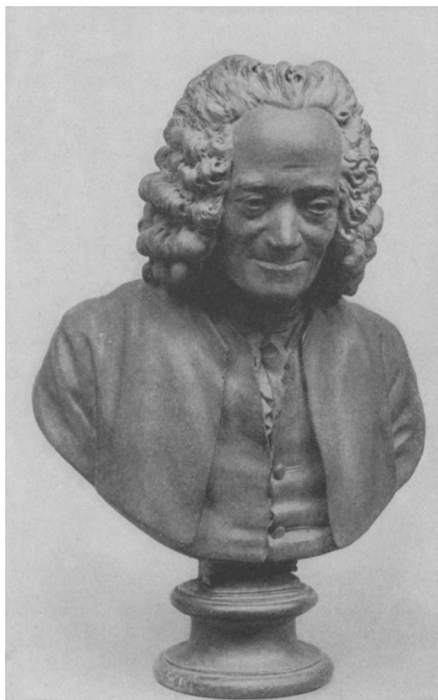
The native Filipino possesses, to a liberal degree, the inherent Malay gifts of artistic qualities, good taste, and refinement, which have been here increased by the trace of Spanish blood. This is manifested by the treatment of the various flower, leaf, and fruit forms which have suggested most of the motifs, and which have been conventionalized and elevated in a true artistic spirit and with a deftness of workmanship that would do honor to

any European or American goldsmith. We have here a most happy blending of European and Oriental types of design, suggesting in some respects the very best Indian work.

The most interesting things in this collection from our distant American possession are the rosaries, necklaces, scapulars, and small relics, or crosses.

The seventeenth and eighteenth century work is extremely distinctive, suggesting the early Greek and Egyptian gold work. The beads are very small, often one millimeter to one and one-half millimeters in diameter, consisting of various

types, one of which has tiny little dots arranged in effective designs. The second type has the flat, rose-like ornaments, and the familiar Malayan beaded decorations, worked in with corals and other ornamentations. On some of the necklaces, the small barrel-shaped beads are interwoven with pearls of various sizes, the larger ones surrounded in part, or entirely with unique carved work. There is one interesting type made of small beads, sur-



BUST OF VOLTAIRE
BY HOUDON